

**In the Claims:**

**Please enter the following amended claim 1:**

1. (Twice Amended) A semiconductor workpiece, comprising:

a metal layer;

C'  
an inorganic dielectric ARC layer disposed directly on the metal layer, wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer functions as a hard mask, and wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer has a substantially uniform thickness over topical non-planarities extending from the metal layer; and

a photoresist layer disposed on the ARC layer opposite the metal layer.

**Please cancel claim 4.**

**Please enter the following amended claim 9:**

9. (Twice Amended) A metallic stack for a semiconductor interconnect, comprising:

a metal layer;

C2  
an inorganic dielectric ARC layer disposed directly on the metal layer, wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer functions as a hard mask, and wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer has a substantially uniform thickness over topical non-planarities extending from the metal layer; and

C<sup>2</sup>  
cont'd

a barrier layer disposed on the metal layer opposite the ARC layer.

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**Please cancel claim 12.**

**Please enter the following amended claim 17:**

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17. (Once Amended) A semiconductor device, comprising:

an oxide layer formed on a wafer; and

at least one microelectronic structure extending from the oxide layer and including:

a barrier layer disposed on the oxide layer;

a metal layer disposed on the barrier layer;

an inorganic dielectric ARC layer disposed directly on the metal

layer, wherein said inorganic dielectric ARC layer functions as a hard

mask; and

a residual photoresist layer disposed directly on said inorganic dielectric

ARC layer.

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C<sup>3</sup>

**Please cancel claim 18.**